



**Testimony Opposing Vermont HB 190
House Committee on Human Services
February 14, 2023**

Vermont HB 190, which would repeal the state residency requirement of the Vermont assisted suicide statute, should be rejected by Vermont legislators. Vermont's legislature should respect the laws and procedures of other states and legislators who have determined that assisted suicide laws pose a danger to their own residents.

Vermonters may wonder why another state would decline to pass an assisted suicide law, which Vermont legislators have viewed as a benefit to its residents. Nevertheless, many view these laws as a danger to people with serious illnesses, chronic conditions and significant disabilities.

On October 9, 2019, the U.S. National Council on Disability (NCD) released the [findings of a federal examination](https://ncd.gov/sites/default/files/NCD_Assisted_Suicide_Report_508.pdf) (https://ncd.gov/sites/default/files/NCD_Assisted_Suicide_Report_508.pdf) of the country's assisted suicide laws and their effect on people with disabilities, finding the laws' safeguards are ineffective and oversight of abuses and mistakes is absent. Over the last two decades, every major [national disability organization](http://notdeadyet.org/disability-groups-opposed-to-assisted-suicide-laws) (<http://notdeadyet.org/disability-groups-opposed-to-assisted-suicide-laws>) that has taken a position on assisted suicide opposes it. Some of the reasons for opposing assisted suicide laws are:

- When assisted suicide is legal, it's the cheapest treatment available—an attractive option in our profit-driven healthcare system.
- Assisted suicide is a prescription for abuse: an heir or abusive caregiver can steer someone towards assisted suicide, witness the request, pick up the lethal dose, and in the end, even administer the drug—no witnesses are required at the death, so who would know?
- Many other pressures exist that can cause people with compromised health to consider hastening their death.

People with disabilities, whether our conditions are predicted to be terminal or not, are often viewed as tragic and worth-less. These societal messages too often lead to suicidal feelings, but these feelings deserve suicide prevention, not suicide assistance.

Let other states determine how best to provide for the safety of their residents. Please oppose HB 190.

Not Dead Yet is a national disability rights organization founded in 1996 and run by people with disabilities. www.notdeadyet.org